

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 001334

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR AF/S HTREGER

USAID FOR DMENDELSON

MCC FOR SGAULL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KCOR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MZ](#)

SUBJECT: MOZAMBIQUE: NEW CHIEF FOR RESTRUCTURED

ANTI-CORRUPTION UNIT

REF: A. MAPUTO 692

[1](#)B. MAPUTO 559

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: On September 9 the controversial head of Mozambique's Anti-Corruption Unit, Assistant Attorney General Isabel Rupia, was removed and replaced by her colleague, Assistant Attorney General Rafael Sebastiao. The GRM explained the move as part of a restructuring process of the Unit announced several weeks earlier. Rupia built a reputation for aggressively investigating corruption allegations, but also, in some instances, for leaking information to journalists on stalled cases, which undermined her effectiveness. Assistant Attorney General Sebastiao has told us he will hire more staff and improve case management. President Guebuza has made fighting corruption a central theme of his administration. To date, however, none of the investigations of allegations against senior officials has resulted in a conviction. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) On September 9 Assistant Attorney General Isabel Rupia was removed as head of the Attorney General's Anti-Corruption Unit (UAC), replaced by colleague and fellow assistant attorney general, Rafael Sebastiao. Rupia remains with the Attorney General's office as head of the Department of Legality, a position she held while she was head of the UAC. Rupia's removal came just weeks after Attorney General Joaquim Madeira formally announced the creation of the Central Office for the Combat of Corruption (GCCC), which under legislation enacted last year replaces the UAC as Mozambique's primary corruption fighting office. Unlike the UAC, the newly established GCCC functions as an autonomous unit under the Attorney General's Office, with its own line item in the GRM's budget and authority to hire additional permanent full-time prosecutors and investigators.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Rupia's removal has been sharply criticized by human rights groups that claim it undermines the government's anti-corruption message. There are also suspicions that Rupia was removed due to political pressure. Under Rupia the UAC took on a series of high profile investigations, including allegations of corruption leveled at former education minister Alcido Nguenha and against the current head of the publicly-owned electricity company, EDM, Vicente Veloso. Rupia's tenacity made her a target, and in December 2003 she narrowly escaped assassination.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Other observers fault Rupia for poor judgment, and believe that this coupled with the unit's inability to produce results under her leadership led to her removal. Of the 128 criminal cases the unit received between 2002 and mid-2005, only 30 have gone to court and none yet have resulted in a conviction. In a September 12 meeting with Emboffs, the Attorney General cited press interference as one of the factors that attributed to the UAC's lack of demonstrated results. (Comment: This may have been a back-handed slight at Rupia, who was well-known for leaking sensitive information to the press when she was frustrated with the lack of progress of some cases. End comment.)

[1](#)5. (SBU) In a series of meetings since his appointment, Sebastiao has stated to Emboffs that he will focus immediately on management issues that have hampered progress to date. He plans to institute a case tracking system - something missing under Rupia - as well as reassign pending cases and augment his staff from the current three part-time prosecutors to the eight full-time mandated under the law. Sebastiao has also stated he will go after cases at any level, a mandate reinforced by statements from Madeira himself.

[1](#)6. (SBU) Sebastiao is considered a close associate of Madeira's. He was the prosecutor assigned to the Siba-Siba murder case, as well as to the Cardoso murder trial in which former President Chissano's son has been implicated. Neither of the cases has progressed, and it is widely speculated that the lack of movement is intentional to protect high-level officials. (Comment: That these cases have been stalled under Sebastiao raises questions whether he will fare any better than Rupia in moving forward with her caseload. End Comment.)

[1](#)7. (SBU) Comment: The current speculation surrounding Rupia's

dismissal comes at a time when the government of President Armando Guebuza has taken a strong public stance against corruption. Fighting corruption was central to his presidential campaign and he has pledged action in many public addresses since taking office. With increased pressure from civil society and the public at large, the stakes have been raised for the GCCC under Sebastiao to produce tangible results.

La Lime